

The Epidemic of Lousy Leadership

The five actions you can take to avoid or fix Lousy Leader Syndrome (LLS).

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Sadly though not surprisingly across the U.S. in companies small and humongous there are tens of thousands of leaders who are doing a lousy job. Some may not know they are doing a bad job and many other leaders know they stink but are stuck; unable or not knowing how to change. These Leaders suffer from Lousy Leader Syndrome (LLS).

Prairie dog above your cubicle or poke your head outside your office. See any leaders who might have LLS? Take a look in the mirror because you may also already have a full-blown case or are developing early symptoms.

It's Not Too Late!

Early detection is the key to avoiding painful consequences. The whispers around the office have been going on for too long. Or maybe, you got feedback that you can't ignore. Perhaps you've been slapped with a sexual harassment lawsuit. Or maybe another failed project, [team](#) revolt, getting fired by the board, or your division just got acquired and you were promptly fired. These are just a few of the many signs and results of untreated LLS. Maybe, your fine. Maybe, it's not you who needs help. Perhaps it's someone else you know and can't stand that is not only suffering from LLS but also making everyone else miserable.

Know the Signs and Symptoms

Telltale indicators of early stage LLS include:

- Excuses made for missed deadlines and other problems.
- Inconsistencies between what is said and what actually get done.
- Closed off to feedback regarding concerns and observations.
- Political and shiesty moves such as favoring some team members over others and controlling what information is shared with whom.
- Ambiguity in direction, objectives, and expectations.
- Disregarding other people's time as demonstrated through cancelling meetings at the last minute, showing up late to meetings, and not showing up at all to appointments.
- Itchy scaly rash on the back of the knees (just kidding!)

Full-blown LLS

Full-blown Lousy Leader Syndrome is characterized by a number of poor behaviors including:

- Hypocrisy: Leaders with LLS often talk about values, ideals, expectations, culture, company, and individual aspirations. However, when it comes to behaviors, there is a deep wide chasm between what the leader suffering with LLS says and what he does.

- Lack clear direction: Leaders with LLS are vague and ambiguous about what they want to achieve, what is required to get there, and how their vision translates to the people they lead.
- Take credit for others success: Leaders with LLS are happy to climb on the backs of the people they lead by taking credit for ideas, results, and efforts of their team.
- Like to use “surprise” feedback—Leaders with LLS like to surprise others with observations, feedback, judgment, and consequences all at once. Instead of providing guidance to help others do better as work is it is being done and helping to course correct, the LLS Leader likes to surprise people they manage by giving feedback after the fact.
- Use their position to control or intimidate: Leaders with LLS make sure that the people around them know who is the boss. The final say, decisions, and last word are theirs alone.
- See the truth as dynamic – Leaders with LLS perceive the truth as something dynamic and flexible.

There is hope. There is a cure:

If you are a leader who is suffering with LLS there is hope. Treating LLS begins with admitting that you have a problem. This is the most significant and challenging step for most leaders as they have been leading with LLS for some time and many have forgotten their old selves. For many though, breaking away from LLS will involve learning completely new behaviors because they have always suffered from LLS.

Breaking the Cycle

Leaders, you have a choice. Here are the steps to avoiding and breaking the vicious cycle of LLS:

1. Get feedback. Living and working in reality is the first step to avoiding and or curing LLS. Whether you use a formal feedback tool or create your own questions, get feedback from your peers, customers, your team, and the leaders above you.
2. Identify the top three areas you need to work on. Prioritize the three most important areas that you need to improve.
3. Share what you heard and what you are going to do. Close the loop with people who gave you feedback. Share with them what you heard and what you have committed to changing.
4. Ask for help. Identify people in your work and personal life who can remind you of when you have veered off track or share when you have done something great.
5. Take action!

Bad [leadership](#) is a choice. If you or someone you know suffers from LLS take action to be or help them become a better leader. The concerned experts at Skylineg.com are here to help.